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DULLES BACKS PRESIDENT'S DENIAL

New Kennedy-Nixon Debate Rages Over Cuban Invasion

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WASHINGTON, D. C. —

The famous television debates of the presidential campaign raged on Tuesday between former Vice President

Richard M. Nixon and President Kennedy on the Cuban issue.

This might be called the fifth debate that never happened, and it looked very much as if Mr. Kennedy had won the final round by at least as large a margin as he won the election.

The question was whether presidential candidate Kennedy had been briefed before the election on the Cuban invasion and had breached security by publicly advocating what was already afoot. Nixon made this accusation in his new book on the "Six Crises" of his career.

A WHITE HOUSE statement yesterday in reply to Nixon denied that Mr. Kennedy had received such information in briefings by then CIA Director Allen W.

Dulles, and Dulles backed up the President saying that Nixon apparently misunderstood the situation.

In a statement issued through the CIA Dulles said that President Kennedy was not given any information during the campaign about "overt or covert" action such as the Cuban invasion. Dulles said there apparently had been "an honest misunderstanding" by Nixon concerning the content of the briefings given Mr. Kennedy.

But what was lacking was information on whether Mr.

Kennedy knew, or suspected, either from his conversations with CIA officials or anyone else, that the United States was backing the Cuban refugee invaders in their preparations to try to regain the island.

The White House statement said that the President "was not told before the election of 1960 of the training of troops outside Cuba or of any plans for supporting an invasion of Cuba" as charged by Nixon.

THE PRESIDENT did not receive this information, the statement said, until Nov. 18, two weeks after the election, when he was briefed by the CIA as president-elect. He was told of the plan by Dulles and Richard Bissell, deputy director, the statement said. Cuba was not mentioned, the statement said, in a briefing just six days before the election.

Nixon wrote in his book that the Kennedy statements on Cuba had been the only thing that "enraged" him during the campaign.

He wrote: "I thought that

Kennedy, with full knowledge of the facts was jeopardizing the security of a foreign policy operation. And my rage was greater because I could do nothing about it."

IN A TELEVISION debate, Mr. Kennedy advocated help for anti-Batista forces who would oppose Castro. In the debate Nixon responded to this suggestion with more vigor than to any other point, except the Matsu-Que-moy issue. Then and thereafter he accused Mr. Kennedy of irresponsibility.

Nixon said that Kennedy's statement forced him to take a softer line and act as if he knew nothing about the inner government circles he had been advocating a strong

"There was only one thing I could do," Nixon wrote. "The covert operation had to be protected at all costs. I must not suggest even by implication that the United States was rendering aid to rebel forces in and out of Cuba. In fact, I must go to the other extreme; I must attack the Kennedy proposal to provide such aid as wrong and irresponsible because it would violate our treaty commitments."

THE RENEWED controversy raised several questions. One of them was: What good does it do to have the CIA brief a presidential candidate if he is not to be informed of pending operations which might be endangered by political statements?

Another question: why should Nixon completely dissemble and misguide the public on his real views in a campaign in which he was supposed to be giving the public a straight count on where he stood?

At the time there was no deep secret about elements of opinion that wanted Castro dealt with vigorously. Castro himself, and Havana radio, were charging continually that an invasion of Cuba was being prepared. At one time an invasion alert was ordered. Knowledge of invasion was discussed widely in Miami, Fla.

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